

Summer 2014

With Honors (Vol. 7)

Iowa State University Honors Program

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THE IOWA STATE HONORS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

WITH HONORS

SUMMER 2014
VOL. 7, NO. 1

Find the Honors Family Book, an annual compilation of alumni news, at honors.www.honors.iastate.edu/alumni/alumniNewsletter.php. To post information, look in the left column under Alumni. Questions? Contact Linda Young at lindakay@iastate.edu.

Board member Carol Brumwell ('77, Math) organized an Honors alumni LinkedIn group at linkedin.com/groups?gid=6686517. Keep in touch with alumni and get a special Gmail account at the Alumni Association's "Programs and Services" at isualum.org/en/programs_services.

See what's happening in Honors through the student blog at honorslife.wordpress.com written by Honors Ambassadors. This group of highly active Honors students write on everything from finals to study abroad, including photos.

Influence today's students by sharing where Honors has taken you! Email a photo and postcard-length message about your current life. We'll make "postcards" for Jischke's electronic bulletin board and Facebook album. Your submission gives permission for Iowa State and the Honors Program to use the image or message in any publication or promotional materials, in any medium now known or developed in the future, without restrictions.

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Alumni Board Explores Social Media

The 2014 meeting of the Honors Program's Alumni Advisory Board featured lively discussion, intriguing ideas, and student presentations. The board planned new ways to connect Honors alumni with one another and with students and finalized the formation of an Honors Program endowment for enrichment of Honors students' experiences.

Student ambassadors spoke to the board about outstanding elements of their Honors education, including the benefits of community life, Honors courses and seminars, and early opportunities to conduct research. Taylor Francis, a junior in Materials Engineering, particularly impressed board members with his observation that "Honors is the key," one that opens various doors to career and grad school possibilities depending on each student's interests. Later on, a diverse group of students demonstrated that the "key" Honors offers could consist of first-year research, international opportunities, national office in student organizations, and a multitude of other possibilities.

The board expressed interest in helping alumni connect with current students, including making connections between alumni and Honors students traveling to, for example, the National Collegiate Honors Council's annual meeting. This fall's meeting is in Denver, so Colorado alumni may have a chance to meet current students there. In addition, board member Carol Brumwell ('77, Math) agreed to organize a Linked-In group for Honors Program alumni (see details at left). Other subcommittees will tackle communication, strategic vision—including a set of by-laws for the board—development, and advocacy.

The work of the alumni Board, and of all Honors alumni, continues to be of

enormous value to the program, as more and more students join the First-Year Honors Program (FHP). After greeting more than 450 FHP students in Fall 2013, Honors expects about that number in the coming fall semester. The "new normal," according to Honors Administrative Director Laurie Smith Law, is likely to be more than 400. This growth will require increasing numbers of faculty to teach more seminars and mentor first-year students in research. As the program builds its endowment, we ask that you maintain your support, and even double your pledge for the next five years to build a permanent base of support for the university's top students.

Athletes Compete and Complete (Honors, that is!)

Elly Arganbright, senior in English and Global Resource Systems, has been even busier than most Honors students over the past four years. In addition to a double major, internship, and other activities, Elly spent four years on the women's basketball team, experiencing the NCAA tournament in each of those years. Elly, and many other Honors students who are varsity or club athletes, agree on the challenges and rewards of combining study and sport.

Time management is the biggest issue these students face, especially when travel commitments and exams arrive at the same time. First-year Mechanical Engineering major Angela Wagner, who plays for the Women's Club Volleyball team, explains that weekend travel, which sometimes means missing class, "can be stressful because I'm pressed to finish

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Fireside Chats Return as Honors Salons

One of the things alumni of the Honors Program often remember fondly is the experience of “fireside chats” in Osborn Cottage. Faculty visiting the building would talk informally about their research or any topic of interest. In the new Jischke Honors Building, there is no fireplace, and there is PowerPoint, but the spirit of the fireside chat is back in the form of Friday afternoon Honors Salons. Acting on suggestions from both alumni and students, Honors Assistant Director Emily Wilcox got the new Honors Salons started this fall with a visit by Steve Butler, Assistant Professor of Mathematics, who introduced students to the mathematics of juggling. Soon after, Larry Genalo, longtime friend of Honors and University Professor of Materials Science and Engineering, talked about and demonstrated “Cool Stuff,” including changing a material’s atomic structure, setting materials on fire, and cooling them in liquid nitrogen.

Over the course of the school year, Honors hosted a total of eleven Salons. Visitors included Michael Bailey, Professor of History, speaking on “Sites of Superstition on College Campuses,” including of course Iowa State; Craig Anderson, Distinguished Professor of Psychology, on global warming, violence, science news, and skepticism; and Robert Wallace, Associate Professor in Ecology, Evolution and Organismal Biology, on “The Science of Wine, Beer, and Spirits (the lessons for life).” Samples were, pointedly, not provided at this salon! Rounding out the salon offerings this spring was Alan Russell, Professor of Materials Science and Engineering, who spoke on his research involving next-generation power lines, work that could reduce greenhouse gases and save billions through greater energy efficiency.

Students responded enthusiastically to the salons—and to the fresh popcorn churned out by the building’s new circus-cart style popcorn maker. As a result, Emily is now searching for next year’s Honors Salon speakers. Alumni with an idea for an engaging staff or faculty member are encouraged to make suggestions via honors@iastate.edu. Since the building has good connections for Skype and other online communications, you’re also warmly invited to recommend alumni you know—or yourself!—to offer a Salon talk. Speaking for Honors students and their eclectic interests, Emily says, “No topic is off the table: eating locally, election fraud, quantum mechanics, economic systems, Helvetica font—we want to hear about it all!”

Athletes in Honors

Athletes continued from page 1

school work.” Her teammate Erin Rettenmaier, sophomore in Industrial Engineering, agrees, but adds, “I think being an athlete in college helps students understand how to work in a team. Athletes also know the hard work that you have to go through to achieve your goals.” Despite a busy schedule, Angela will be an FHP leader in the fall, as were Erin and Elly in their sophomore years.

These and other Honors student-athletes, including Trey Achterhoff, a first-year student in Mechanical Engineering and a sprinter/hurdler on the ISU track team, follow in a long tradition of Honors alumni who participated in sports. These include hoopster Marc Urquhart (’89, Biology), and runner Lia Pierson (’95, Chemical Engineering); Jon Matthew Rouse (’94, Civil Engineering) and Carl Kirpes (’12, Mechanical Engineering and Industrial and Manufacturing Systems Engineering), both members of the football team; and Robert (Bobby) Petersen (’90, Finance), who played both baseball and football.

Honors student-athletes may be attracted to Iowa State for its sports traditions – growing up cheering for the cardinal and gold does tend to make you want to become a Cyclone – but also for its excellent academics. As Elly says, “Dedication, self-motivation, the ability to work well with others are all skills that athletes may have that make it easier to succeed in Honors.”

Elly can’t say whether her Honors project was tougher than the NCAA tournament, though she sees parallels: “They’re both capstones to months and years of hard work,” and both require learning as you go. Both experiences, she says, took time and preparation, and both proved equally challenging and rewarding.

Paper Airplanes in School



Qiyi Li, Honors senior in Landscape Architecture, transformed the College of Design atrium last fall with her project *A Little Dreamer*. The 634 paper airplanes, which looked as if they were in flight, were made of paper gathered from recycling bins. The project was a personal and artistic statement and a way to remind people of waste. *Photo by Alison Weidemann.*

A Visit with Paxton Williams

Paxton Williams, ('00, Political Science) returned to campus in April to reprise his dramatic role as George Washington Carver at the Carver Life and Legacy Symposium, at the estimated sesquicentennial of Carver's birth. Before donning the moustache and academic's jacket familiar to many since he produced a one-man play on Carver for his Honors project, he spoke to Honors students and staff about his career.

It was Sande McNabb, a Professor of Plant Pathology and Forestry, who catalyzed Paxton's interest in Carver through an Honors seminar that included a trip to Carver's birthplace in Missouri. The one-man play that evolved from that seminar was performed in the M Shop at VEISHEA in 2000. Paxton later took the play to England, where he studied on a Rotary Scholarship, as well as to Italy and on tour in the U.S. Portraying Carver led him, in turn, to serving for several years as Executive Director of the George Washington Carver Birthplace Association.

In 2010, Paxton turned to his long-standing career goal of attending law school, and he recently completed his law degree at the University of Chicago. But that hasn't quenched his interest in dramatic writing and performance. Paxton has a new play, not a one-man show this time, *At Mother Dunbar's Request*, about the early twentieth-century poet Paul Dunbar. Dunbar, a prolific writer, wrote poems, plays, and lyrics in his brief career (he died of tuberculosis in 1906). This new play debuted in March at the Poetry Foundation in Chicago.

In addition, Paxton has worked with renowned legal scholar and philosopher Martha Nussbaum, one of his instructors at the University of Chicago, and jurist Richard Posner, currently a judge on the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, in a production of a classical tragedy, *Aeschylus' Oresteia*.

In all these activities, Paxton has found that "the key is to put yourself out there, and keep doing what you're doing." He advises students (sounding just a bit like the Wizard of Oz), "There are successful people who have no more talent than you do - so get out there!" Paxton taken his own advice, for his next adventure is into academic publishing. He had previously co-authored a paper with Jim Hutter, Professor of Political Science, and is awaiting publication of an essay in a collection edited by Nussbaum, *American Guy: Masculinity in American Law and Literature* forthcoming from Oxford University Press.



Paxton Williams ('00, Political Science) visits with seniors Anna Bellegante, English, and Mitch Nieland, Performing Arts, while on campus for this spring's George Washington Carver Life and Legacy Symposium in April. *Photo by Meghan Blancas.*

Students, Alumni Enjoy FHP Gala



Current students met with FHP alums at last fall's 40th anniversary gala. At left, Jered Stratton, sophomore in Genetics, entertained visitors by playing classical guitar. At right, alumni from the "Guinea Pig" FHP classes show off their Honors medallions. From left: Mary Lutz ('78, Zoology), Carol Jahnke Brumwell ('77, Math), Dr. Andrew Hart ('80, Biophysics), Dr. Sidney Showers ('77, Pre-Med), Dr. Michael Kuchera ('76, History and Zoology), Gregor Dougal ('79, Electrical Engineering and Physics), and Connie Howard ('77, Journalism). *Photos by Meghan Blancas.*

News and Notes about Honors

✿ Honors student leads GSB *again*

Hillary Kletscher, a junior in Biological Systems Engineering and last year's vice president of the Government of the Student Body (GSB), recently took the reins as GSB president for 2014-15. Her inauguration continues a recent run of Honors students in top GSB positions. Hillary grew up on a Minnesota farm, and her first semester in Honors saw her make repeated trips home to fulfill her obligations as president of Minnesota's FFA Association. These days, her presidential agenda includes developing a bike-sharing program on campus, but her first challenge came only two days into her term, when VEISHEA was suspended on April 9. Hillary is a member of the presidential task force studying the future of VEISHEA.

✿ Honors students sweep Goldwater prizes, earn other awards

For the first time, Iowa State had four students (the highest number possible) named as Goldwater Scholars this year, and all four are members of the Honors Program. They are Jake Harry, a junior in Aerospace Engineering, Thomas Knief, a junior in Physics, William Lindemann, a junior in Materials Science Engineering and Mathematics, and Rachel Philiph, a junior in Materials Science Engineering. In addition, senior in Psychology Diane Fru received a Fulbright Scholarship to Taiwan, and Genna Tesdall, junior in Global Resource Systems and Biology, received Honorable Mention in the Udall Scholarship competition. Deepak Premkumar, senior in Global Resource Systems, Economics, and Mathematics, who was profiled last year in these pages, was a finalist for a Rhodes Scholarship. He'll start on a Ph.D. in development economics at Berkeley in the fall.

✿ Honors students win Barron Awards

Current Honors students picked up three of this year's five Wallace E Barron Award All-University Senior Awards (the other two, we understand, are former Honors students). Winners of the Barron awards include Deepak Premkumar, mentioned above, Trisha Collins, senior in Animal Science and International Agriculture, and Ryan Francois, senior in Civil Engineering. Ryan also received recognition from the College of Engineering for his innovative Honors project on public space; he built a trailer-portable "parklet" for the City of Ames that's exactly the size of a parking spot.

✿ "Comedy College" among new Honors Seminars

Among many new Honors seminars this past year was one that taught students to speak up, think on their feet, be creative, and roll with the punches, by practicing the art of standup comedy. Taught by Peter Orazem, University Professor of Economics, and his mentor in the art of comedy Gavin Jerome, a professional comedian, the seminar included the history, theory, and especially practice of comedy, culminating in two nights of stand-up in the Memorial Union's M Shop. If there was laughter and applause, Jerome explained, students would pass the course. No one failed.

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